

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

January 19, 2011

The Honorable Robert Gates
Secretary of Defense
U.S. Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon, Room 3E718
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Gates:

We write today to express our continued concern over the Base Closure and Realignment (BRAC) recommendation #133. In particular, we believe the full implementation of BRAC #133 will have tremendously negative effects upon the transportation infrastructure and the provision of fire and emergency medical services (EMS) in northern Virginia.

As you know, BRAC #133 will relocate approximately 6,400 Department of Defense (DoD) personnel from leased office space, accessible by public transit, in northern Virginia to the Mark Center complex in Alexandria, VA, which is not proximate to any Metro station. Numerous reports, including the Army's own Transportation Management Plan (TMP), have concluded that the implementation of BRAC #133 will severely degrade the transportation infrastructure surrounding the Mark Center, causing failing levels of service. Further, without updated mutual aid agreements, local municipalities, whose resources are already constrained, will struggle to respond to a fire or medical emergency in a timely manner.

To address the tremendous transportation challenge BRAC #133 poses, Section 2704 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2011 (H.R. 6523) requires the Secretary of the Army to produce a transportation plan for BRAC #133 that maintains existing levels of service at six key intersections surrounding the site. The Army's TMP, as it exists today, fails to meet the standard imposed by Section 2704. Though we have serious doubts that the full implementation of BRAC #133 will lead to any result other than failing levels of service, the Army can mitigate this by implementing the following recommendations.

First, the DoD should immediately waive Defense Access Roads Program (DAR) criteria and fund the short- and medium-term transportation infrastructure improvements as recently recommended by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT). According to VDOT's most recent analysis, without these improvements all six intersections identified by Section 2704 will experience failing levels of service. To be clear, even should funding be identified, ground would not be broken on any of the improvements until February 2012, five months after the full implementation of BRAC #133, and the short-term improvements would not be completed before December 2012.

Second, before the Mark Center is occupied, the DoD should agree to subsidize local transit which already provides service to stops surrounding the Mark Center. Currently, the Washington Headquarters Service (WHS) plans to pay for private shuttles to transport approximately 23% of its employees from surrounding Metro stops and the Pentagon. Subsidizing local transit options provided by the City of Alexandria (DASH) and WMATA would allow each to expand service to the Mark Center, serving the dual purpose of providing an additional transit option for DoD employees and reducing the number of single and multiple occupancy vehicles commuting to the site.

Third, the WHS should pay for the location of traffic police provided by an appropriate jurisdiction at several intersections surrounding the Mark Center complex. Throughout the National Capital Region the DoD pays for basic police functions to provide static security at locations housing defense personnel. In fact, at the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency headquarters in Arlington, VA, the DoD has since 2001 temporarily and indirectly paid Arlington County for county police and vehicles. The DoD should replicate this model to provide temporary police functions at intersections that will be affected by the BRAC #133 relocation until sufficient transportation infrastructure is in place to support the relocation without causing a degradation of service.

Fourth, if the Army cannot implement the BRAC #133 without causing a degradation of service to local intersections, we ask that the DoD not fully implement the move until sufficient transportation infrastructure is in place. As you know, in 2007 the Army suspended a record of decision to place BRAC #133 on the Engineering Proving Grounds (EPG) of Fort Belvoir due to transportation concerns and the costs of mitigation measures. We ask that the same standard be applied in order to avoid inflicting undue hardship upon civilian infrastructure.

Finally, we remain concerned that the Army has yet to update a mutual aid agreement for the provision of fire and emergency medical services at the Mark Center with all of the signatories of the northern Virginia Emergency Services Mutual Response Agreement. Nine months from the full occupation of the Mark Center, northern Virginia remains woefully underprepared to respond to an incident at the site without simultaneously jeopardizing the safety and security of the area's other residents, despite written reassurances from LTG Rick Lynch and Secretary McHugh.

We believe that the complete implementation of BRAC #133 will cause a tremendous burden upon not only northern Virginia residents, but also upon the nearly 200,000 commuters that use I-395 everyday. Should the DoD implement the recommendations described above, we believe the department's effect upon the area's transportation infrastructure can be lessened. Thank you for your consideration of our request and we hope the department will remain a willing partner as the BRAC deadline approaches.

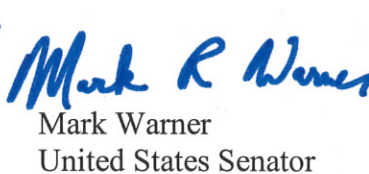
Sincerely,



James P. Moran
U.S. Representative



Jim Webb
United States Senator



Mark Warner
United States Senator



Gerald E. Connolly
U.S. Representative

CC: The Honorable John McHugh, Secretary of the Army
The Honorable Dorothy Robyn, Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Installations and Environment)
The Honorable Katherine Hammack, Assistant Secretary of the Army (Installations and Environment)
Lieutenant General Rick Lynch, Commanding General, U.S. Army Installation Management Command
Michael Rhodes, Director of Administration and Management, Washington Headquarters Service